

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7263

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

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AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 0033

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MILI, XA, GB

SUBJ: MILITARY SURVEY TEAM MEETING WITH BONGO

1. SUMMARY. MILITARY SURVEY TEAM HAD INITIAL MEETING
WITH PRESIDENT BONGO JANUARY 8 AND HAS SCHEDULED MEETINGS
WITH VARIOUS SERVICES IN COURSE NEXT FIVE DAYS. END
SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SURVEY TEAM AND AMBASSADOR MET FOR NEARLY
ONE HOUR JANUARY 8 WITH PRESIDENT BONGO, WHO OUTLINED
GENERAL NATURE OF THREAT PERCEIVED BY GABON FROM
NEIGHBORS COMING INCREASINGLY UNDER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE
(NOTABLY EQUATORIAL GUINEA AND CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE). HE
SPOKE AT LENGTH OF SITUATION IN ANGOLA (SEPTTEL) AS
FURTHER ELEMENT OF DANGER IN CENTRAL AFRICA, AND AS
FRESH EVIDENCE OF MALEVOLENT SOVIET INTENTIONS. TERMS OF
PRESENTATION CLOSELY PARALLELED THOSE OF EARLIER EXCHANGES
WITH MULCAHY AND SCHAUFEE, AND WERE INTENDED (IN WORDS
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OF PRESIDENT'S DIRECTEUR DE CABINET) TO PROVIDE "GENERAL

ORIENTATION" FOR TEAM'S CONSIDERATION OF GOG DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS.

3. SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF TEAM, COLONEL KERSEY CONVEYED BEST WISHES OF SECDEF AND THEN REVIEWED TERMS OF REFERENCE CONTAINED STATE 000807, STRESSING THAT TEAM'S PRESENCE IN ITSELF CONSTITUTED EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY USG AND GOG INTERESTS AND IN SMALL MEASURE A POSITIVE RESPONSE FOR PAST GABONESE SUPPORT OF USG. TEAM CHIEF AGAIN MADE CLEAR THAT MISSION LIMITED TO STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS, WITH FINAL DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN WASHINGTON ON BASIS OF REPORT WHICH TEAM WILL PREPARE AFTER THEIR RETURN HOME.

4. AFTERNOON JANUARY 8, TEAM MEMBERS MET WITH DIRECTEUR DE CABINET MAYILA, DESIGNATED BY PRESIDENT AS COORDINATOR FOR VISIT, AND WITH SENIOR OFFICERS OF ARMED FORCES, PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, GENDARMERIE, AND POLICE. IN COURSE OF MEETING, MAYILA PRESENTED TEAM AND SERVICE CHIEFS WITH DRAFT "SHOPPING LIST" OF GOG REQUIREMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED WITHIN PRESIDENCY. IN ACCEPTING COPY OF LIST, TEAM CHIEF STRESSED NEED TO DISTINGUISH SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM NEEDS, ELICITING GENERAL RESPONSE FROM MAYILA THAT ALL NEEDS HAVE BECOME URGENT BECAUSE OF INCREASED THREAT TO GABONESE SECURITY DESCRIBED EARLIER BY PRESIDENT. MEETING CLOSED WITH SCHEDULING OF INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS DURING NEXT FIVE DAYS AT WHICH TEAM MEMBERS WILL MEET WITH EACH SERVICE TO REFINE DRAFT "SHOPPING LIST" FOR FINAL APPROVAL BY PRESIDENT. TEAM EXPECTED MEET AGAIN WITH SERVICE CHIEFS COLLECTIVELY AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITH PRESIDENT DURING COURSE OF DAY ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14.

5. COMMENT: INITIAL MEETINGS PRODUCED NO SURPRISES, WITH BONGO'S PRESENTATION OF CASE FOR ASSISTANCE TO GABON ALONG EXPECTED LINES. SEPARATE MEETINGS OVER NEXT FEW DAYS WILL PERMIT TEAM TO ASSESS THREATS AND CAPABILITIES IN DETAIL NECESSARY TO PERMIT IDENTIFICATION OF SECURITY NEEDS AND PREPARATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH TERMS OF REFERENCE. STEIGMAN

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